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ABSTRACT

In this curriculum unit, students create an itinerary and describe an Internet road trip from California to the East Coast. The student guide provides an overview of the activity, detailed instructions, a list of online resources, and reflection questions. The teacher's notes describe the unit's purpose, its correlation to historical and social sciences skills, and how to conduct the lesson, including management and assessment tips. (RJC)

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Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

Coast to Coast Virtual Road Trip

9-11 Grade Lesson by Jerry Swanitz and Harvey Green

SO 031 500

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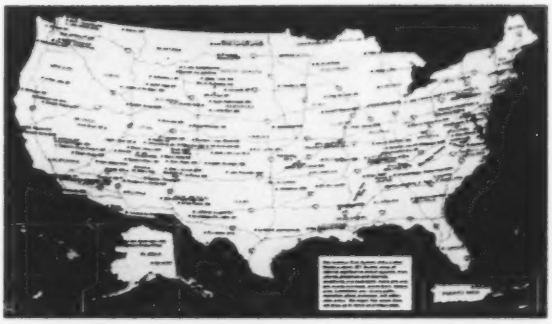
Teacher notes



COAST TO COAST VIRTUAL ROAD TRIP

YOUR TASK

You and a partner will be taking a coast to coast virtual road trip, visiting several United States cities along the way. In your travels, you will be developing your Internet searching skills enhancing your understanding of United States geography, learning how to read a road map, improving your writing skills, and engaging in record keeping and doing simple mathematical computations. Ultimately, you will produce a detailed journal of your findings, and present your findings to the National Society of Geographic Enthusiasts (NSGE).

THE PROCESS

You will be traveling, with a partner, from the city where you live to a destination city of your choice on the east coast. You are free to cruise the U.S. in any direction you choose as long as you eventually end up in the destination city you selected. You are allowed to travel approximately 300 to 500 miles per day on your journey, and you may explore any of the sights and attractions you encounter along your way. The first task is to choose your

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destination city.

When you have selected your city, you will shop for a vehicle on the Internet. You have been given an unlimited budget for this trip, so you can spend as much as you like!

After the vehicle is selected you must begin to determine the route to travel. Plot the route using road atlases and show that route on a butcher paper map of the U.S. that you create. Color each state, identify the cities you will be visiting, name each state, and locate and place state capitals. Distance can easily be determined by using http://www.mapquest.com or the cyber router found on the search.com page.

You are responsible for keeping a journal describing each day of your trip, including your car shopping excursion. Journals must be appropriate: no sex, drugs, or alcohol. The journals should include the following information for each day :

- Where you ate
- What you saw
- Where you stayed
- How much money was spent.

Be sure to locate lodging on the Internet as well as finding sights to see and things to do. The running record of expenses must include gasoline expenses - figured at an average price of $1.30 a gallon for gas and an average of 20 mpg.

You are also responsible for a report on the destination city which includes information about that city: history, demographics, government, landmarks, famous things to see and do, etc.

You will also create two postcards that you write to the NSGE from two of your stops. The cards are created by using images from the Internet.

To demonstrate the difference between the two cities you chose to compare on your road trip, you must complete the following projects:

1. Create a collage delineating the differences in each geographical theme. Include photographs, articles, poetry, e-mail from the two cities' residents, statistical documentation, newspaper ads, etc.
2. Produce a weather/climate chart which graphically documents the differences of the two cities.
3. Map the cities and their surrounding areas. Include physical, topographical and places of interest.
4. Make personal contacts with residents of the cities, and interview them regarding the human/environment interaction.
5. Make a photo album displaying the difference between the two cities using downloaded pictures from the Internet.

The big day is here! You have your blank check and the task is laid out before you: it is nothing but wide-open highway, and the wonders of America ahead of you. Get that car of your dreams, investigate your destination city, and put it in drive. Youíre on your way!

RESOURCES:

U.S. atlases and the Internet lab.

Geography

http://www.for.nau.edu:80/~alew/ustxtwlc.html
http://members.aol.com/bowermanb/101.html
http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/us.html
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/resources/ngo/maps/atlas/index.html

Map of the USA

http://www.for.nau.edu:80/~alew/uslndfrm.gif
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/Map_collection.html
http://fermi.jhuapl.edu/states/states.html
http://www.yahooligans.com/Around_the_World/U_S__States/
http://www.mapquest.com

Specific Cities and Points of Interest

To locate information on specific cities and points of interest, use the following search engines:

http://www.excite.com
http://usacitylink.com
http://www.citynet.com
http://magellangeo.com
http://www.search.com
http://www.weberawler.com

National Scenic Byways

http://www.byways.org/

LEARNING ADVICE

Either create a separate section of your notebook for this road trip, or provide a separate

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notebook for the trip. Make sure you address all aspects of your notebook, and lay it out so the trip unfolds in order of your daily progress. Be creative, colorful, neat and complete. The NSGE is depending on you!

Each team must work efficiently. When one person is on the Internet, the other should be record keeping and gathering the printed information for the journal. Each person should have equal time at both tasks. When off-line, you should be working together on map interpretation, researching, collecting and organizing the fruits of your search.

EVALUATION

You will earn points for each component of the coast to coast journal, and the presentation to the NSGE (class.) Your teacher will design a rubric with the number of points and quality desired for each component of the notebook and presentation.

CONCLUSION

Your work is finished when you complete your oral presentation at the meeting of the National Society of Geography Enthusiasts (the class). You will know how successful you are in convincing others that your cities are the ones that have been most impacted by geography by the decision of the class. If yours are not the ìTopî cities, you have helped promote geography education in the schools by building awareness.

REFLECTION

1. What skills, concepts and knowledge did you gain through this geographical experience?

2. What was most difficult to research? What was easiest? Why?

3. What would you do to improve the road trip in the future?

4. Of the places along the way that you visited virtually, which would you most like to visit in person? Why?

TEACHER NOTES

Grade level and unit:

Grade 9 Geography
Human Environmental Interaction

Lesson purpose:

- Students will understand the impact of the environment on peopleís lives.
- Students will plan and organize a long term project.
- Students will develop skill working on a team.

Lesson length:

This lesson can be taught in 10 class periods.

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills:

Grades 9-12

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

3.Students use a variety of map and documents to interpret human movement, including major patterns of domestic and international migration; changing environmental preferences and settlement patterns; the frictions that develop between population groups; and the diffusion of ideas, technological innovations, and goods

4.students relate current events to the physical and human characteristics of places and regions

Historical Interpretation

5.students analyze human modifications of a landscapes, and examine the resulting environmental policy issues

Management and Assessment Tips:

- A good way to keep a handle on individual participation is to assign a separate grade for the participation of each student based on your observation of on-task behavior. This will ensure more even distribution of work from the team members.

- Emphasize the daily progress of student investigations during the road trip by having students report out to the whole group at the beginning of class.
- It will be good to spot check progress, and collect journal notebooks at regular intervals to iron out difficulties, make revision suggestions, and keep them on the road to success.
- Set clear tasks and monitor Internet use of groups to ensure maximum on-task behavior, and minimal surfing or downtime.

Extra Materials/Resources:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Maps of the United States

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